

In the claims:

All of the claims presented for examination are reproduced below.

1-42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently amended) An Instant Messaging (IM) Communication system, comprising:

two or more proprietary IM servers in a data-packet-network, each providing a different IM service and protocol to specific clients;

an IM server in a communication center, the IM server connected to the Internet data-packet-network and to a Local Area Network (LAN), the LAN [[also]] connecting computerized workstations used by agents of the communication center;

a set of routing rules for the communication center; and

stored agent data [[at]] for the communication center, the data including agent availability and IM capability relative to one or more IM protocols;

wherein the IM server in the communication center receives IM notifications from the two or more IM servers in the Internet data-packet-network the notifications representing desired communication between the specific clients of the IM servers in the Internet data-packet-network and an agent of the communication center, consults the communication center routing rules, IM protocol capabilities and the stored agent data to determine an available agent with the needed IM capability, and establishes IM communication between the specific clients and the agent determined to be available and to have the needed IM protocol capability.

44. (Previously presented) The system of claim 43 wherein the IM server in the communication center, in the event of receiving an IM notification, conducts IM communication with the specified client initiating the notification, elicits information from the client, and uses the elicited information along with the agent data and availability to determine the capable and available agent with whom to establish the IM communication for the client.

45. (Previously presented) The system of claim 43 wherein the data-packet network is the Internet network.

46. (Currently amended) A communication center Instant messaging (IM) server connected to a data-packet-network and to a Local Area Network (LAN) also connecting computerized workstations used by agents of the communication center comprising:

at least one bi-directional data port for receiving data thereto and sending data there from;

at least one version of instant messaging software executable therein for generating, sending and receiving instant messages;

wherein the IM server receives IM notifications from the two or more IM servers in the Internet data-packet-network, the notifications representing desired communication between the specific clients of the IM servers in the Internet data-packet-network and an agent of the communication center, consults [[the]] communication center routing rules, IM protocol capabilities and [[the]] stored agent data to determine an available agent with the needed IM capability, and establishes IM communication between the specific clients and the agent determined to be available and to have the needed IM protocol capability.

47. (Previously presented) The IM server of claim 46 wherein, in the event of receiving an IM notification, the IM server of the communication center conducts IM communication with the specified client initiating the notification, elicits information from the client, and uses the elicited information along with the agent data and availability to determine the capable and available agent with whom to establish the IM communication for the client.

48. (Previously presented) The system of claim 46 wherein the data-packet network is the Internet network.

49. (Currently amended) A method for establishing an instant message communication channel over a data-packet-network between a client and a customer service representative representing an enterprise based on returned results of at least one executed routine comprising the steps of:

- (a) client establishment of a network connection;
- (b) establishing a client-to-server connection with an Instant Messaging (IM) server operating in a communication center using an instant messaging software application;
- (c) receiving at the IM server of the communication center IM notifications from two or more IM servers in the data-packet-network, the notifications representing desired communication between specific clients of the IM servers in the data-packet-network and an agent of the communication center;
- (d) the IM server of the communication center consulting the communication center routing rules and IM protocol capabilities for the agent and stored communication center agent data to determine an available agent with the required IM protocol capability;
- (e) the IM server establishing IM communication between specific clients and the agent determined to be available and to have the required IM protocol capability.

50. (Previously presented) The method of claim 47 wherein in step (c), in the event of receiving an IM notification, the IM server of the communication center conducts IM communication with the specified client initiating the notification, elicits information from the client, and uses the elicited information along with the agent data and availability to determine the capable and available agent with whom to establish the IM communication for the client.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 47 wherein the data-packet network is the Internet network.